

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ISO-00 EUR-12 AGRE-00 EB-08 L-03

PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BISSAU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1202

INFO AMEMBASSY PRAIA POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SPOP, PU, CV

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S ROLE IN DEALING WITH PRESSING GLOBAL
PROBLEMS - POPULATION GROWTH AND ADEQUATE FOOD PRODUCTION

REF: STATE 107370

1. THIS TELEGRAM IS FIRST REPORT ON SUBJECT, AS REQUESTED
REFTEL, FOR BOTH GUINEA-BISSAU AND CAPE VERDE.

2. GUINEA-BISSAU: GUINEA-BISSAU IS COUNTRY WITHOUT
SERIOUS POPULATION PRESSURE AT THIS MOMENT. HOWEVER,
GOVERNMENT FULLY CONSCIOUS THAT THIS SITUATION IS DUE
PRIMARILY TO TWO FACTORS - THIRTEEN-YEAR INDEPENDENCE
WAR AND TRAGICALLY HIGH CHILD DEATH RATE (ESTIMATED
BY GOVERNMENT AT 450 PER THOUSAND) - WHICH WILL EITHER
NO LONGER APPLY IN FUTURE (WAR) OR WHICH GOVERNMENT
DETERMINED TO END (INFANT DEATH RATE). GOGB'S PRIORITY
AT PRESENT IS TO RESTORE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION TO
ACHIEVE FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY. THIS GOAL IS FEASIBLE
WITHIN THREE TO FIVE YEARS, BUT NOT MAINTAINABLE IF
HEALTH PROGRAMS ARE SUCCESSFUL AND POPULATION
GROWTH BOOMS. GOGB AWARE OF THIS DANGER AND HAS
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BEGUN FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM. HOWEVER,
GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO ALREADY RUN INTO TRADI-
TIONAL REACTIONS, PARTICULARLY FROM WOMEN (GUINEA-
BISSAU'S MOST PROMINENT FEMALE POLITICAL FIGURE
HELD MEETING WITH NEIGHBORHOOD WOMEN LEADERS TO
DISCUSS PROGRAM AND WAS FORCED TO BACK OFF AS
MARKET WOMEN AND SUPPORTERS INDIGNANTLY DEMANDED

WHETHER GOVERNMENT WAS ATTEMPTING TO TURN THEIR DAUGHTERS INTO PROSTITUTES.) GOGB DOES NOT INTEND TO ABANDON ITS PROGRAM, BUT WILL MOVE AHEAD MORE SLOWLY.

3. I HAVE DISCUSSED SUBJECT WITH SECRETARIES-GENERAL OF COMMISSARIATS (MINISTRIES) OF HEALTH AND AGRICULTURE, AND INDICATED THAT USG COULD HELP SUPPORT WELL PLANNED PROGRAMS. (LAST YEAR WE FINANCED EQUIPMENT FOR SPECIAL POPULATION SURVEY UNDER AID SPECIAL POPULATION ACTIVITIES FUND.) GOGB IS PLANNING FIRST COMPLETE POPULATION CENSUS IN FIFTEEN YEARS. WE MAY BE ABLE TO ASSIST, WHICH COULD BE MAJOR CONTRIBUTION AS PROCUREMENT OF RELIABLE POPULATION INFORMATION IS NECESSARY EARLY STEP IN PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING NATIONAL WIDE POPULATION GROWTH MANAGEMENT PROGRAM.

4. CAPE VERDE: CAPE VERDE ISLANDS IS FACED WITH ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST DRAMATIC FOOD SUPPLY PROBLEMS AS ONGOING DROUGHT HAS REDUCED LOCAL FOOD PRODUCTION TO UNDER FIVE PERCENT OF NEEDS. NEVERTHELESS, GOVERNMENT SOMEWHAT SANGUINE ABOUT POPULATION GROWTH AS RECENT SPOT SURVEYS INDICATE THAT POPULATION MAY BE ONLY ABOUT 270,000 AS AGAINST OVER 300,000 WHICH HAS BEEN CONVENTIONAL ESTIMATE. TRADITIONAL CAPE VERDEAN EMMIGRATION PATTERN ALSO ALLEVIATES GOVERNMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CONCERNS IN THIS AREA. ON OTHER HAND GOGB AWARE OF POTENTIAL PROBLEM, AND HAS BEGUN THINKING OF SUBJECT. THERE ARE PLANS TO INTEGRATE FAMILY PLANNING INSTRUCTION INTO PROPOSED RURAL HEALTH CLINIC SYSTEM.

5. GOCV HAS TO DEAL WITH DEEPLY RELIGIOUS AND CONSERVATIVE CATHOLIC POPULATION WHICH ON MANY ISLANDS IS ALSO DEEPLY SUSPICIOUS OF NEW GOVERNMENT. GOCV THEREFORE FEELS IT MUST MOVE SLOWLY IN THIS AREA AS IN OTHER SENSITIVE SECTORS (E.G. LAND REFORM).

6. DURING RECENT VISIT TO CAPE VERDE, I DISCUSSED THESE INTER-RELATED SUBJECTS WITH FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEVELOPMENT. I EXPLAINED USG INTERESTS AS WELL POSSIBILITIES FOR COOPERATION. AS IN BISSAU, SUCH COOPERATION WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO MATURE.
MARKS

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